The Fog and the Thorn

EXT. CAMP CRYSTAL LAKE - NIGHT

LEADER, 20s, adorned in all black stealth attire makes his way through the vast, eerie forest after being separated from The Huntsmen.

As Leader advances further into the ghastly area he notices a fog beginning to form all around him resulting in a prolonged coughing fit dropping his flashlight.

LEADER

It’s poisonous. The air smells the same as the Project lake.

He falls to his knees as reaches closer to a light source.

INT. PLAIN WHITE HOUSE - LATER

AGATHA CALYPSO, 60s, dressed in an all white evening gown and crimson red sweater sways in her rocking chair. There is a nightstand next to her with a singular photograph on it.

AGATHA

Oh, how long I’ve waited for this night.

Agatha picks the photograph up from the nightstand. It’s a framed picture of her and a young man, 20s, in a boiler suit.

AGATHA

I missed you so much, Michael. Tonight you will return to me. Reborn into this world because of me. Because of thorn!

EXT. CAMP CRYSTAL LAKE - RESUMING

Completely unconscious Leader seizes and hallucinates.

EXT. ACE TANAHASHI’S HOME - DAY

Leader stands outside of a quaint rural Japanese home. There he sees himself dragging an ELDERLY COUPLE, both 70s, out of the home as it burns to the ground.

Another man stands beside him. ACE TANAHASHI, 40s, dressed in his ring white and red ring gear stares at the wreckage alongside Leader. He turns to Leader with a smile on his face.

(CONTINUED)

ACE TANAHASHI
You did this to my parents, to my childhood home, all because you wanted a championship belt. You're criminal scum!

Leader turns to Ace flashing a look of regret.

ACE TANAHASHI
Don't look at me like you have any remorse. There is nothing inside of you even remotely human. No soul, no conscience. You took pleasure in this. Now continue watching.

Leader and Ace continue to watch as the home burns to the ground as the fire department arrive on the scene.

Ace looks at Leader once again. The warm smile he once had replaced with a demonic grin.

ACE TANAHASHI
CONGRATULATIONS!

Ace delivers a crushing blow to Leader's abdomen. He crumbles before him as Ace dematerializes into dust.

The environment all around Leader dematerializes as well. Another light shines outward that's a bit closer this time.

INT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - DAY

MUNCHIE, 20s, in black trunks is in the ring applying a submission hold on Leader in the middle of the ring. P1, 20s, in green and white compression shorts watches on in exhaustion.

Leader repeatedly taps his hands on his leg signaling a submission. The audience in attendance erupts as Munchie is crowned the new EXO Heavyweight Champion. After the confetti falls and Munchie and P1 depart the ring Leader grabs a microphone.

LEADER
Tonight we put on a show that only Power Of Legend could! And Yonko proved that we're the best this place, or any other place -

Leader imitates a fake cough

LEADER(CONT'D)
Mementos - has to offer!

The vibrant New York crowd erupts in an explosive "P-O-L" chant.

Leader in the black stealth attire is standing near the entranceway watching himself orate. Munchie steps from behind gorilla out into the entrance to stand with Leader. He flashes him a warm smile.

MUNCHIE
This is it. This was the moment you quit on us. Our hottest run, I'm the chapion, we have all the political power in the company, and you quit on Yonko. We were supposed to be brothers, you know?

In the ring Leader raises the microphone again. This time looking forlorn.

LEADER
Now what I'm about to say might depress a bunch of you. Beyond the characters we play on television there lies a human just like the rest of you. Part of being a human is accepting the chaos that is life. Well, my real life, my human life outside of this business has been turned upside down. I have to deal with some personal things, so this is the last show I'm doing for a while.

Munchie scoffs. Leader looks at Munchie with regret, and remorse.

MUNCHIE
Human? You? There is nothing inside of you even remotely human. No soul, no conscience. You took pleasure in this. Now continue watching.

LEADER(IN THE RING)
I just want all of you to know that everything I did in this ring was for all of you. Whether it was beating down Dirty Dick at Mania, whooping my good friend Sparty's ass like a friend could. Teaming
(MORE)

LEADER(IN THE RING) (cont'd)
with my homegirl Lass in some of the best tag matches ever. Or, sharing this sacred mat with two of my other friends, Munchie and P1, in a championship main event. It was all for you.

Some fans are cheering, some fans are in shock that Leader is stepping away. Some even crying.

LEADER(CONT'D)
I am so gonna catch shit on Twitter for breaking kayfabe and talking about who I'm friends with! Hey, at least the fights are still real.

Leader air quotes "kayfabe".

LEADER(CONT'D)
What are they gonna call this, Curtain Call 2? No matter what they say on Twitter, or reddit, or anywhere else New York I fucking love you and I'll see you when I see you!

Leader blows a double air kiss to the audience, bows, and as his music plays he exits the ring to applause.

Munchie turns to Leader with his warm smile faded. Replaced with a sinister grin. He delivers a gut punch that drops Leader to a knee.

MUNCHIE
CONGRATULATIONS!

The light returns. It's luminosity growing ever closer.

INT. KORAKUEN HALL - DAY

A packed Korakuen Hall cheers as Yonko wins their 8-man tag team match and are raising each other's arms in victory.

Leader watches from the English announcer's table. P1 sits in a seat near the entrance inviting Leader to sit down next to him. He obliges. P1 shows a warm toothy smile. His teeth bleeding.

P1
You're an idiot! You couldn't leave well enough alone. You just had to
(MORE)

P1 (cont’d)
make one of your stupid "statements", didn’t you?

LEADER
I thought I lost my brother.

P1
We’re not brothers. You don’t leave your brothers behind all the time and expect them to always forgive you! Plus, you attacked me! That’s also difficult to forgive!

The blood trickles from P1’s mouth as he continues on.

P1
All you ever did was start fights with people backstage, and the rest of us had to clean up your messes, especially Sparty...

LEADER
Your mouth, there’s blood.

P1
I know. You did this to me. See?

P1 points towards the ring. Leader is holding P1’s arm up then in one swift movement pulls him in, whipping him around driving his face into the mat.

The Korakuen Hall audience boos Leader as he plants a foot on P1’s chest.

Leader’s face is stricken with remorse.
P1

P1
Don’t pull that sad face bullshit with me! There is nothing inside of you even remotely human. No soul, no conscience. You took pleasure in this. Now continue watching.

They both look at the ring where Leader is pummeling P1 with heavy rights and lefts. The timekeeper is ringing the bell frantically, and the audience goers are stunned and appalled at what they’re witnessing.

As the beating increases in intensity P1’s toothy grin fades. Replaced with a blackhearted, bloodstained grin. The floor fills with blood, and soon the entire arena is engulfed in it. Everyone fruitlessly fighting to breathe. Suffocating.

P1
CONGRATULATIONS!

P1’s congratulations is muffled out due to the drowning. The light draws as near as its even been.

EXT. CAMP CRYSTAL LAKE - RESUMING

Leader, who is still writhing on the ground, arm is covered in scratch marks with slight bleeding. Even unconscious the smell of iron overwhelmes his senses.

As the light beams directly at his face he slips back into another hallucination.

INT. STAPLES CENTER - NIGHT

As P1 exits the ring after his pinfall victory over Leader in a tag bout, Leader looks over at a beaten Sparty.

He walks over to him to help him up. This time he’s not watching from afar in third person. He’s in the ring.

SPARTY
You know what part this is, right? This is the part where you injure my leg and cost me ring time because I couldn’t help you win your petty war!

LEADER
I’m sorry. About all of this.

Leader hits Sparty with a stiff forearm strike causing him to crumple to the mat.

He stares at his fallen tag partner. The tears well up in his eyes.

LEADER(CONT’D)
Why don’t I have control of my body?

Walking over to Sparty he grabs his leg and fights with his body to not apply the kneebar. Resistance is futile as the submission hold is locked on anyway.

LEADER(CONT'D)
What is wrong with me? Why am I doing this again? I don't want to hurt any of you anymore!

Sparty shows no signs of pain.

SPARTY
Dig a little deeper than that.

LEADER
Why do I keep doing this to people? Using them for my wars. Hurting them with the trouble I caused. Why can't I control myself? Why do I have no self-control? What the fuck is wrong with me?

SPARTY
Now dig even deeper.

LEADER
I don't know.

SPARTY
You do. Figure it out.

The ring fills with EXO roster members trying to pry Leader off of Sparty. They can't pull him off.

SPARTY(CONT'D)
They can't pull you off of me until you figure it out. And if you don't figure it out, you'll break my leg to the point I won't be able to wrestle again.

LEADER(CONT'D)
I do this because I am insecure. I cause everyone pain because I never learned to control my anger, my envy. All I was ever taught was to express negative feelings in the form of hostility thereby alienating myself from others. My contempt is reserved for everyone. Even you, Hex, Munchie, P1, and Lass. The only one I ever cared about was Daisy, and since we're one in the same, then the only one I ever cared about was myself.

The wrestlers finally pry Leader off of Sparty. He sits there looking vacant. Staring at what he’s done. Staring through everyone in front of him. Replaying what he just said over and over again.

SPARTY
Now was that so diffcult? I think my leg may actually be broken, though....

Leader is still stunned in silence. Staring. He can’t move his body anymore. He has lost all control.

The ring is cleared out except for Sparty, but is then filled with familiar faces. Friend, and foe. Past, and present. All of them applauding.

SPARTY
CONGRATULATIONS!

MUNCHIE
CONGRATULATIONS!

ACE TANAHASHI
CONGRATULATIONS!

P1
CONGRATULATIONS!

EVERYONE
CONGRATULATIONS!

The lights in the Staples Center start flickering uncontrollably. The building is caving in on itself.

LEADER
Thank you all!

The building finally collapses and the lights go out.

EXT. CAMP CRYSTAL LAKE - RESUMING

Leader is shocked awake as the shine from the flashlight faints. The fog has faded. The surrounding area is dark again.

He gets up from the ground, replaces the batteries in the flashlight, and heads north where the large gates are. It’s the Spencer Mansion. Munchie’s place.

A fire is lit in Leader’s eyes as he readies himself for the fight of his life. He resumes his more confident demeanor.

LEADER
Groovy.